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(U) Hungary had a highly proficient communications intelligence service before and during World War II. Unfortunately, due to the destruction and dislocation caused by the war, for the most part the service is known primarily in broad outline. Only a few details are now available.

(U) The Hungarian service, known as Section X (sometimes as Sub-group X), was founded in 1920 by Hermann Pokorny, pictured, who had spent a career in the Austro-Hungarian military intelligence organization. When the map of middle Europe was rearranged after WWI, he went with the new nation of Hungary. (See History Today of September 16, 2010, for more information on Pokorny.)

(U) Between the world wars, the primary targets for Hungarian COMINT were the Soviet Union, Romania, and Turkey. The latter was a target because it was believed to have good information on the USSR. Details are hard to come by: it appears they made little progress against Soviet ciphers, but had a fair amount of success against Romanian and Turkish diplomatic traffic.

(U) During World War II, Section X was a "second party" to the German Army and Air Force cryptologic organizations. The Germans treated them poorly in terms of cooperation on cryptanalysis, but apparently valued Hungarian intercept on the Balkans, which was much better than any German service could do.

(U) Details about the fate of Section X after the war, when the country was occupied by the Red Army, are few. Some sections surrendered to the U.S. Army and provided the Allies with valuable information about wartime efforts. It seems that those who were captured by the Soviets were used to help build a new cryptologic service, then, after a few years, were purged because of their wartime cooperation with the Germans.

(U) A one-time chief of Section X recalled one odd prewar use of its decrypts.

(U) During a period when Hungary was seeking to build better relations with Ankara, Section X solved the cryptosystem used by the Turkish military attache in Budapest. A series of decrypts indicated the attache was sending false -- and sometimes damaging -- reports to his leadership.

He sent reports of meetings that had not occurred and fabricated statements allegedly from the Hungarian government that were unflattering to Turkey.

(U) Based on these decrypts, Hungarian intelligence assigned an agent to establish a close friendship with one of the attache's female employees. When the agent became familiar with the milieu, he burgled the attache's safe in such a way that it looked as if only the attache could have done it.

(U) Further decrypts confirmed that the ambassador blamed the attache, who was in need of money to support a fast lifestyle, and had him recalled.

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